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Horns blew and people cheered as George Washington stepped up to take his inauguration ceremony. Washington was chosen to be the president of the United States. George knew he would set traditions for future presidents. He started off his presidency with big problems. He hardly had a standing army except for companies of militia, which were not professional soldiers. Also, the British were still in forts and the government at this time finally had the authority to make them go away, but also, they did not have the soldiers to force them to leave.

George started with nothing, and it was his job to guide the country. He chose Thomas Jefferson to Secretary of State, Henry Knox, the Secretary of War, and Alexander Hamilton, who was the Secretary of the Treasury. George also appointed an attorney general as well as the first Supreme Court Justice, which was John Jay. He met with Thomas, Henry, and Alexander and the attorney general, which was a little later, called the cabinet.

As Washington started to take control of the nation, he had tremendous financial problems. As a matter of fact, the president concentrated on financial matters as well as foreign affairs. The national debt was a big issue because it just grew and grew. Bonds were very popular at first, but then speculators bought them for half the price it owed. The people that held the bonds were downcast because they doubted the new government would pay back the expenses.

Hamilton was in a struggle of his own as he made a compromise with the Southern leaders that they help pay off the debt, and that he gets the president to move the permanent capital in a place where Virginia and Maryland along the banks of the Potomac River. This special district then became as we know it today, Washington D.C.

Hamilton made a request for a national bank, but the idea was not popular with Thomas Jefferson or James Madison. They thought the idea was unconstitutional. Hamilton also proposed that a tariff be laid on imports to encourage people to get people to buy American goods. It would protect American industry. Hamilton gave the government new financial powers and liberties.

Washington had a struggle over the West because of the Native Americans and the Spaniards. Also, he had to deal with trying to keep his country’s neutrality during the French Revolution. The Americans were divided on whom they should support in the war. Jay’s Treaty was established, but people did not like it because it did nothing to stop the British practices of forcing Americans to be impressed in their navy.

By 1796, George Washington announced he did not want a third term of presidency. George (not knowing) set a precedent that later presidents followed. In fact, Washington influenced the nation’s foreign policy for about 100 years. He did so great as a founding father; his farewell address is still read aloud on his birthday.